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THEY BUILT CHICAGO

Entrepreneurs Who Shaped A Great City's Architecture

Miles L. Berger

HILL AL LIN CULLER OF LANCE.

took me to visit the site," Weissbourd recalls, "where I guessed correctly that his inspiration for the name of the building came from the 'peak in Darien' mentioned in a sonnet by John Keats. From then on I handled most of the work with Greenwald, and that was fine with Joe because he had lots of other clients." Greenwald's eldest son Bennet recalls his father saying of Weissbourd, "I think Bernie is the right hand I need. He has a conscience. He's brilliant. And he's the toughest negotiator I know." Greenwald was moving fast in the 1950s, and as his lawyer and business adviser, Weissbourd had his work cut out for him. Fueled by Federal Housing Administration Title I funds, Greenwald's projects by the end of the decade included urban renewal and community development projects in Detroit, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Newark, as well as more Chicago apartment developments.

These were exciting times. Greenwald was totally engrossed in the revolutionary new architecture of Mies van der Rohe, while Weissbourd's activities were focused on the business aspects of the firm. "There was a side of things that I didn't know a lot about until later," Weissbourd recalled. "Greenwald and Mies would like to sit around at night and drink and talk about things. That's where the issues were decided. They didn't have formal meetings where others were present." Financing was always a problem. Greenwald was cre-

Illinois Central Railroad property, 1936. The Illinois Center megadevelopment was built on air rights over the Illinois Central Railroad yards, seen at the lower left of this aerial photo looking south over the central business district. (Chicago Historical Society)





